MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM

NR Eligible:	yes	
	no	

Property Name: Thomas Cropper Farm	Inventory Number: WO-575
Address: 11238 Ocean Gateway Highway (US 50)	Historic district: yes X no
City: Berlin Zip Code: 21811	County: Worcester
USGS Quadrangle(s): Berlin	
Property Owner: William E. Cropper, trustee Te	ax Account ID Number: 03-018547
Tax Map Parcel Number(s): 299 Tax Map Number	r:21
Project: MD 589: US 113 to US 50 Agency:	Maryland State Highway Administration
Agency Prepared By: A&HC, Inc.	
Preparer's Name: Erin Hammerstedt	Date Prepared: 1/10/2008
Documentation is presented in:	
Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: X Eligibility recommended	Eligibility not recommended
Criteria: X A B X C D Considerations: A B	CDEFG
Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource	to a NR district/property:
Name of the District/Property:	
Inventory Number: Eligible: yes	Listed: yes
Site visit by MHT Staf yes X no Name:	Date:
Description of Property and Justification: (Please attach map and photo) Physical Description: The Thomas Cropper Farm is a 47.23-acre property located of to as Ocean Gateway Highway, at its intersection with MD 589. The farm contains a clustered near the northeast corner of the property's cultivated fields. The farmhous 1908-1910, is three bays wide and two stories tall, with a side-gable roof and a full-value two-story ell, which appears to be original, is attached to the rear (south) elevation gabled addition and four shed additions are also attached to the house. The house an and have an asphalt shingled roof. All of the additions appear to be more than fifty outbuildings currently stand on the property. These appear to be a washhouse, a gar sheds, a corn crib, three chicken houses, and a field barn. All of these outbuildings siding. Some have asphalt shingled roofs, while others have metal roofs. No moder farm. Brief History: This farm was originally built by Thomas Cropper between 1908 and ownership of his son, Sewell Cropper, until 1991. In May, 1908, Thomas H. Cropper.	a single dwelling and nine outbuildings, se, which was built by Thomas Cropper circa width screened front porch with a hipped roof, n of the main block. A one-and-a-half story and all of its additions are clad in wood shingles years old. In addition to the house, nine rage, two workshops with attached equipment are of wood frame construction with wood on buildings are present on the Thomas Cropper
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW	
Eligibility recommended Eligibility not recommended	
Criteria: XA B XC D Considerations: A	BCDEFG
MHT Comments: Representative example of	a common type
7. 7 O	6/26/20
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services	Date
Bluty -	7/2/08
Reviewer, National Register Program	Date

WO-575

Thomas Cropper Farm

Page 2

farm for \$2,000. Thomas H. Cropper constructed the house shortly after purchasing the land in 1908. He and his family resided on the property in 1910. Thomas was a general farmer, while one of his sons was a sawyer and two were farm laborers working on a horse farm. Thomas's wife, three-year-old son, and retired father-in-law also resided on the farm in 1910. By 1920, Thomas H. Cropper, age 63, still lived on the farm with his wife and two sons. Thomas was identified as a general farmer, as was his son, Sewell. Sewell got married in 1921, and in 1922, his father sold him ½ of the 100-acre farm, including this farmstead. As was common in the period, Sewell Cropper raised large numbers of chickens, and grew corn, soy beans, and wheat, as well as fruits and vegetables. Cropper owned this farm for the remaining 69 years of his life, passing away in 1991 at the age of 93. The property was conveyed to William E. Cropper, the farm's current owner, in 1992.

National Register Evaluation: The Thomas Cropper Farm is eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criteria A and C. The farm is one of few properties in the area that retains sufficient integrity to convey its important historical association with the area's agricultural history. The buildings on the property reflect important trends that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns or our history: the almost 50-acre farm was divided off of a larger farm in the early twentieth century, a practice that was exceedingly common; the house and its associated outbuildings reflect the evolution of diversified or general farming on Maryland's eastern shore — with an emphasis on raising chickens, and a notable lack of dairying resources. Thus, the property is significant under Criterion A. The buildings that comprise the farmstead embody distinctive architectural characteristics of their type or period of construction. Although each lacks distinction individually, together they represent a significant and distinguishable entity that clearly reflects building styles and methods of the first half of the twentieth century. Therefore, the Thomas Cropper Farm is significant under Criterion C. Although the buildings are not currently in use and their condition will likely deteriorate quickly, they currently retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association so that they can clearly convey their historic and architectural significance.

The property is not known to be associated with any person of particular importance on a local, state, or national level, and so it is not eligible under Criterion B. The archaeological potential of the property has not been evaluated, so the property cannot be determined eligible under Criterion D.

MARYL	AND H	ISTO	RICAL	TRUST	REVI	EW							
Eligibilit	y recom	mend	led		Eli	gibility not recommen	nded						
Criteria: MHT Co	-	A _	B	c	D	Considerations:	A	В	C	D	E	F	G
	Rev	viewe	r, Office	e of Pres	ervatio	on Services	are an integral and	<u> </u>	Date	•		_	
- Official desired in the contract of the cont	R	leviev	ver, Nat	ional Re	gister l	Program			Date			_	

WORCESTER COUNTY

HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

SURVEY NO.:

WO-575

NAME:

Thomas Cropper Farm

LOCATION:

11238 Ocean Gateway Highway (US 50)

DATE:

1908-1910

ACCESS:

Private

DESCRIPTION:

The Thomas Cropper Farm is a 47.23-acre property on the south side of US 50 (Ocean Gateway Highway) at its intersection with MD 589 (Racetrack Road) near Grays Corner. The farm consists of a farmhouse and nine outbuildings, all of which are currently vacant, although the fields are in cultivation. The farmhouse, built by Thomas Cropper between 1908 and 1910, is a two-story, three-bay frame building clad in wooden shingles. A one-story, hipped-roof screened porch is located on the façade. An original two-story kitchen ell and later infill additions are attached to the rear of the house. Windows have one-over-one wood sashes. The side-gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The outbuildings are not currently in use and it is difficult to identify their original functions; however, it appears that they consist of a wash house, a garage, two workshops with attached equipment sheds, three chicken houses, a corncrib, and a field barn. All of these buildings are of wood frame construction with wood siding. Roofs are either asphalt-shingle or metal.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Thomas Cropper Farm is recommended eligible for inclusion in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties and the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The farm is one of few properties in the area that retains sufficient integrity to convey its important historical association with the area's agricultural history. The buildings on the property reflect important trends that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns or our history: the almost 50-acre farm was divided off of a larger farm in the early twentieth century, a practice that was exceedingly common; the house and its associated outbuildings reflect the evolution of diversified or general farming on Maryland's Eastern Shore – with an emphasis on raising chickens, and a notable lack of dairying resources. Thus, the property is significant under Criterion A. The buildings that comprise the farmstead embody distinctive architectural characteristics of their type or period of construction. Although each lacks distinction individually, together they represent a significant and distinguishable entity that clearly reflects building styles and methods of the first half of the twentieth century. Therefore, the Thomas Cropper Farm is significant under Criterion C. Although the buildings are not currently in use and their condition will likely deteriorate quickly, they currently retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association so that they can clearly convey their historic and architectural significance.

Inventory No. WO-575

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

1. Name of I	Property	(indicate preferred n	ame)		
historic	Thomas Cropper	Farm (preferred)			
other	Sewell Cropper F	arm			
2. Location					
street and number	11238 Ocean Gat	eway Highway		*—\	not for publication
city, town	Berlin			X	vicinity
county	Worcester				
3. Owner of	Property	(give names and mailing	addresses of all owner	s)	
name	William E. Cropp	per, trustee			
street and number	633 Dawn Driv	e		telephone	
city, town	N. Fort Myers	8.	state FL	zip code 3	33903-5678
4. Location	of Legal D	escription	,	d	
courthouse, registr	y of deeds, etc.	Register of Deeds	liber	SVH 3768 folio	410
city, town	Snow Hill	tax map 26	tax parcel 299	tax ID n	number 03-018547
Contri Deteri Deteri Recor	ibuting Resource i mined Eligible for mined Ineligible for rded by HABS/HA ric Structure Repo	n National Register District n Local Historic District the National Register/Marylar r the National Register/Marylar ER rt or Research Report at MH	and Register		9
o. Classifica	ation	F		200	
Categorydistrictbuilding(s)structuresiteobject	OwnershippublicX_privateboth	Current Function X agriculture commerce/trade defense domestic education funerary government health care	landscaperecreation/culturereligionsocialtransportationwork in progressunknownvacant/not in use	0 0 0 10	Noncontributing O building O sites O structure O objects O Total

7. Description		 Inventory No.	WO-575
Condition			
excellent good	deteriorated ruins		
X fair	altered		

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Thomas Cropper Farm is a 47.23-acre property located on the south side of US 50, commonly referred to as Ocean Gateway Highway, at its intersection with MD 589. The farm contains a single dwelling and nine outbuildings, clustered near the northeast corner of the property's cultivated fields (Photographs 1 and 2).

The farmhouse, which was built by Thomas Cropper circa 1908-1910, is three bays wide and two stories tall, with a side-gable roof. A full-width screened porch with a hipped roof occupies the first story of the façade (north elevation), while three one-over-one wood sash windows with exterior aluminum storm windows are present on the second story. One window is present on each of the two main levels and in the attic on the house's eastern gable end, while two windows are present on each level (with the exception of the attic which has one window) on the western gable end (Photograph 3). A two-story gabled ell, which appears to be original to the building, is attached to the rear elevation of the main block, its western wall flush with that of the main block (Photograph 4). Two windows are present on the second story of western side of the ell, while three windows are present on each level of the ell's eastern side. All of these windows are one-over-one wood sash matching those in the main block of the house. A brick chimney with corbelled cap is present in the southern gable end of the ell. A one-story shed addition containing a secondary entrance as well as four six-over-six and one four-over-four double-hung windows fills the area behind the main block, east of the ell (Photograph 5). A oneand-a-half-story gabled addition extends from rear (south side) of the ell. This addition has an exterior brick chimney in its southern gable end, and contains one-over-one wood sash windows on the first floor and smaller two-over-two windows in the attic. Shedroofed additions have been made on all three sides of this structure: a very small, waist-high shed addition with double-leaf doors is present on the east side; a moderately sized shed addition with a door on the east side and a single one-over-one window on the south and west sides is attached to the south side; and a full length shed addition with its west wall flush with that of the two-story ell and containing a group of three adjacent one-over-one windows is attached on the west (Photographs 4 and 5). The house and all of its additions are clad in wood shingles and have an asphalt shingled roof. All of the additions appear to be more than fifty years old.

In addition to the house, nine outbuildings currently stand on the property. None of them are currently in use, making their function difficult to discern. The first outbuilding stands just southwest of the house. The gabled roof of the one-story building runs generally east/west, with shed additions on the north and south sides (Photographs 4 and 6). This appears to be a domestic outbuilding of some sort – perhaps a wash house. A one-story garage stands to the southwest of the house, immediately adjacent to a workshop with an attached equipment shed (Photographs 6 and 7). A small chicken house and a corn crib are near these buildings, just a bit farther southwest (Photograph 7). Another workshop with an attached equipment shed stands farther east on the farmstead (Photograph 8). Two large chicken houses, each with a shed roof sloping downward to the north to allow for several large south-facing windows, stand at the southern edge of the farmstead, looking out over cultivated fields (Photograph 9). Another long, low building, this one with a gable roof and a large end door, also stands on the property (Photograph 10). This building is more remote, being located southeast of the other buildings, and may have served as a field barn. All of these outbuildings are of wood frame construction with wood siding. Some have asphalt shingled roofs, while others have metal roofs. No modern buildings are present on the Thomas Cropper farm.

8. Significa	ance		¥.	Inventory No.	WO-575
Period	Areas of Significance	Check and j	ustify below		
1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899 <u>X</u> 1900-1999 2000-	 X agriculture archeology X architecture art commerce communications community planning conservation 	 economics education engineering entertainment/ recreation ethnic heritage exploration/ settlement 	health/medicine industry invention landscape architectu law literature maritime history military	performing arts philosophy politics/governn re religion science social history transportation other:	
Specific dates	1908-1910		Architect/Builder Un	ıknown	
Construction da	ites 1908-1910				<u> </u>
Evaluation for:					
6 1	National Register	XN	Maryland Register	not evaluate	ed

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The Thomas Cropper Farm is eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criteria A and C. The farm is one of few properties in the area that retains sufficient integrity to convey its important historical association with the area's agricultural history. The buildings on the property reflect important trends that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns or our history: the almost 50-acre farm was divided off of a larger farm in the early twentieth century, a practice that was exceedingly common; the house and its associated outbuildings reflect the evolution of diversified or general farming on Maryland's eastern shore — with an emphasis on raising chickens, and a notable lack of dairying resources. Thus, the property is significant under Criterion A. The buildings that comprise the farmstead embody distinctive architectural characteristics of their type or period of construction. Although each lacks distinction individually, together they represent a significant and distinguishable entity that clearly reflects building styles and methods of the first half of the twentieth century. Therefore, the Thomas Cropper Farm is significant under Criterion C. Although the buildings are not currently in use and their condition will likely deteriorate quickly, they currently retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association so that they can clearly convey their historic and architectural significance. The property is not known to be associated with any person of particular importance on a local, state, or national level, and so it is not eligible under Criterion B. The archaeological potential of the property has not been evaluated, so the property cannot be determined eligible under Criterion D.

The Thomas Cropper Farm was subdivided from a larger 197 1/4-acre tract acquired by Samuel J. Massey in 1871 (FHP 15/539). In 1877, S. J. Massey is identified as the owner of this property and much of the area to the east, on which two residences and a store were present. No buildings were present in the vicinity of this farmstead (Lake, Griffing & Stevenson 1877). During this period, the property was known as "Holly Grove," "Addition to Holly Grove," and "Overlook" (FHP 15/539). On the 1877 map, the name Holly Grove is given to the small railroad station located at the intersection of the Wicomico and Pocomoke Railroad and a dirt road extending south from the state road leading from Berlin to Ocean City. Massey's farm was north and west of Holly Grove (Lake, Griffing & Stevenson 1877).

Massey conveyed just over 197 acres of his property to John M. Taylor, acting as mortgagor in the transaction. Following Taylor's death, a case was filed in the circuit court in 1891 to liquidate his estate and settle his debts. George M. Upshur was assigned by the court to oversee the real estate proceedings associated with the case. This property was sold to Jesse B. Taylor at a public sale for \$1,475. In January, 1901, Jesse B. Taylor had satisfied the terms of the sale, and the property was conveyed to him by George M. Upshur (FHP 15/539).

In May, 1908, Thomas H. Cropper purchased a portion of Jesse B. Taylor and his wife Mary L. Taylor's farm for \$2,000. In preparation for the sale, the property was surveyed by W.U. Schoolfield, surveyor for Worcester County, in March, 1908. At this time, for reasons unknown, this 101 ¼-acre property was known as the "James Massey Land" (ODC 1/476). Based on the fact that this "land" was being subdivided from a larger, established farm, and the fact that no buildings were present in the vicinity of this farmstead in 1901, it seems likely that Thomas H. Cropper built the house shortly after purchasing the land in 1908 (ODC 1/476;

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Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Thomas Cropper Farm Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

USGS 1901). In 1910, Thomas H. Cropper appears in census records as the owner of a farm adjacent to that of Jesse B. Taylor (United States Population Census, 1910). This suggests that a residence was built on the property between 1908 and 1910. Tax records give a date of construction of 1915 for the property's primary building, confirming that the farmhouse that stands today was present by that date (Worcester County Tax Records).

In 1910, Thomas H. Cropper, age 54, was living and working on his general farm, along with his wife, Liza A. Cropper, age 48. They had four sons living at home: Robert, John, Sewell, and Milton that were 25, 19, 12, and 3 years old, respectively. Robert was a sawyer, working at a local saw mill, while John and Sewell were identified as farm laborers, working on a horse farm. This suggests that the boys were farmhands for a neighboring farm, rather than working for their father, who operated a "general" farm, not a horse farm. Liza's retired father, John McCabe of Delaware, age 81, was also living with the family at the time (United States Population Census, 1910).

By 1920, Thomas H. Cropper, age 63, still lived on the farm with his wife, now listed as Annie E(liza), age 58. Their sons Sewell, age 22, and Milton, age 13, still lived with them on the farm. Thomas Cropper was listed as a general farmer, and Sewell Cropper was also engaged in farming, probably helping his father (United States Population Census, 1920).

In 1921, at the age of 23, Sewell Cropper married Gracie Jane, who was 24. Then in January, 1922, Thomas H. and Eliza A(nnie) Cropper conveyed approximately 50 acres of the 101-acre farm they had purchased in 1908, including the farmhouse and outbuildings, to Sewell and his wife Gracie Jane Cropper. The state road from Berlin to Ocean City (now Grays Corner Road) formed the northeast boundary of the property, while the estate of Robert H. Cropper bordered the farm on the east, southeast, south, and southwest sides. The Connaway Farm, which was owned by the sons of J. G. Harrison in 1922, formed the west side of the property, and the real estate of Louise Connaway Lang, George Collier, Handy Gray, and Mary Jones in the area known as Grays Corner bounded the property on the northwest and north (ODC 42/134-135).

In 1930, Sewell and Gracie Jane Cropper, then 33 and 34 years old respectively, continued to own and work on their general farm, and had one son, age 7. Census records also suggest that the Cropper household had one resident servant, named Mable Duncan, a white female, age 18 (United States Population Census, 1930). Based on the buildings that are present today, it is clear that the Croppers were raising significant numbers of chickens, as was common throughout the area during this period. However, the "general farm" was certainly growing corn and soy beans, and probably wheat, as well as fruits and vegetables, too.

Sewell Cropper owned this farm for the remaining 69 years of his life, passing away in 1991 at the age of 93. His wife, Gracie Jane Cropper preceded him in death by 24 years, having died in January, 1967. In his will dated February 6, 1988, Sewell Cropper bequeathed this farm and five other smaller properties in the area to his son, William E. Cropper. The deed of distribution, wherein the property was conveyed to William E. Cropper, was recorded in December, 1992 (RHO 1896/80). William E. Cropper, who currently resides in Florida, owns the property today. The buildings to not appear to be inhabited, but the farmland is being cultivated.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No.

WO-575

Lake, Griffing & Stevenson (publishers)

1877 Atlas of Wicomico, Somerset & Worcester Counties, Maryland. Philadelphia.

United States Geologic Survey (USGS)

1901 Ocean City, Maryland. 15-Minute Topographic Quadrangle.

United States Population Census

Population Census Data for 1910, 1920, and 1930 accessed at http://www.ancestry.com

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property _	47.23 acres			
Acreage of historical setting	50 acres			
Quadrangle name	Berlin	Quadrangle scale:	1:24,000	

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Thomas Cropper Farm includes the 47.23-acre property, referred to in tax records as Map 26, Parcel 299, located on the south side of US 50 (Ocean Gatway Highway) at its intersection with MD 589 (see site plan). The property extends to the southern right-of-way line of US 50 on the north, and the adjoining property lines on the east, south, and west. This area includes all of the contiguous area historically associated with this farm that belongs to the property today. Portions of the property that have been divided from the main farm property in the past are not included as part of the historic Thomas Cropper Farm.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Erin Hammerstedt, Program Director		
organization	A&HC, Inc.	date	January 10, 2008
treet & number	101 North Pennsylvania Avenue	telephone	(814) 364-2135
city or town	Centre Hall	state	Pennsylvania

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust DHCD/DHCP 100 Community Place Crownsville, MD 21032-2023 410-514-7600

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. WO-575

Thomas Cropper Farm Continuation Sheet

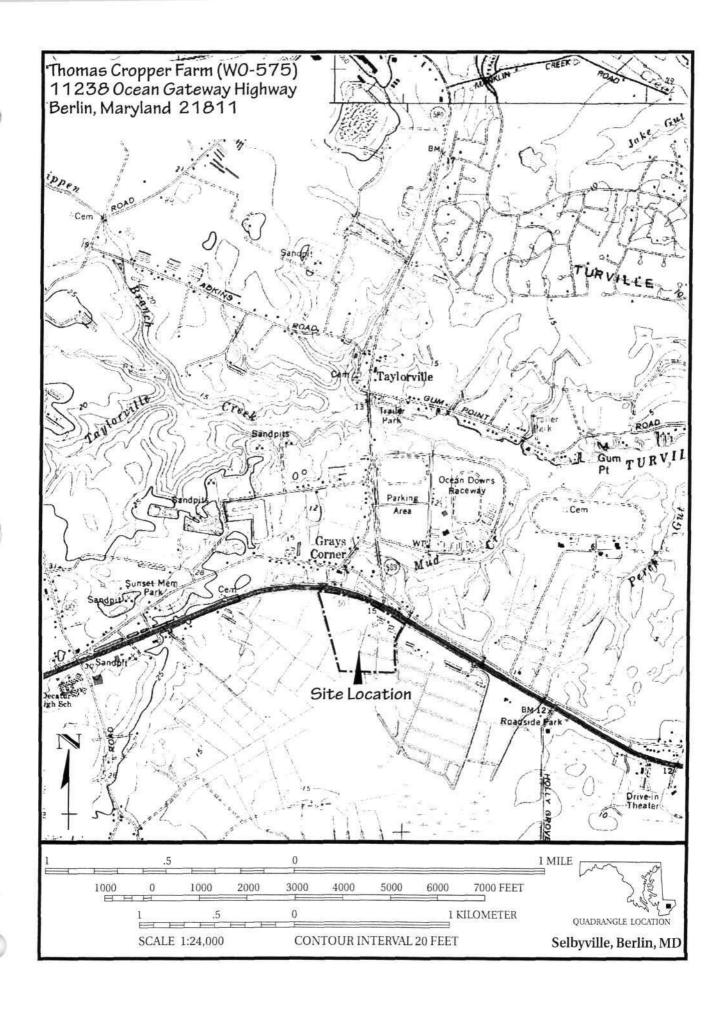
Number 9 Page 1

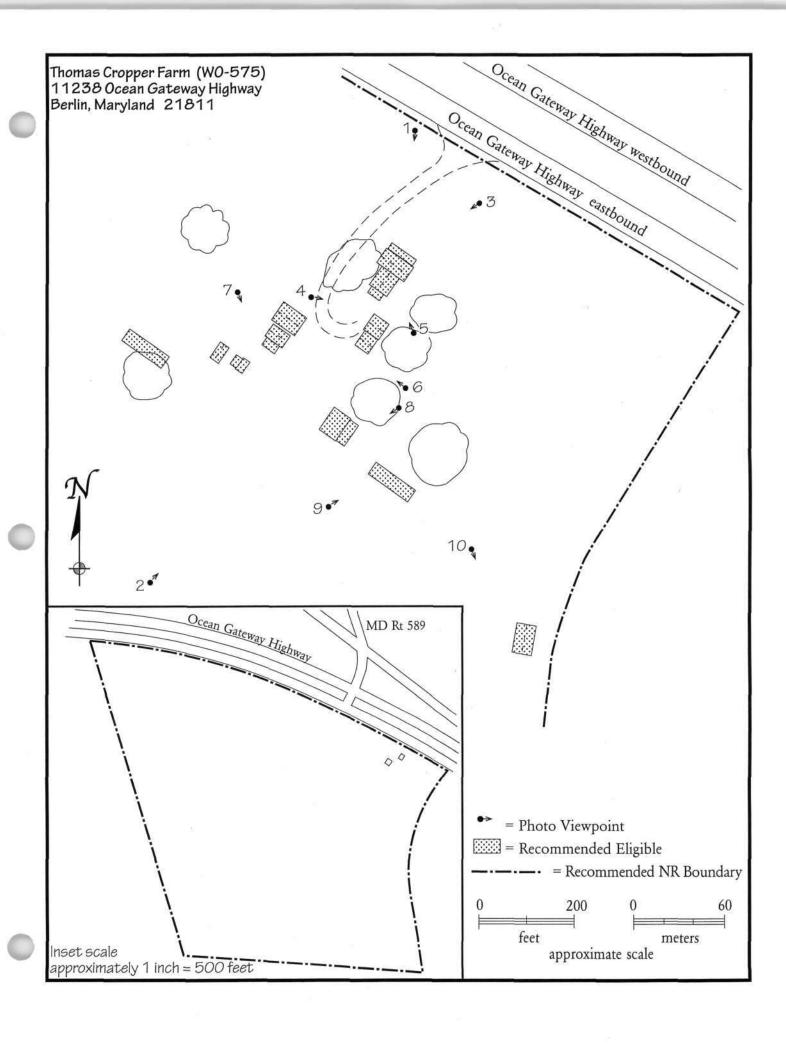
Worcester County Deeds

Worcester County Deeds accessed at http://www.mdlandrec.net/. Referenced in text by clerk's initials, liber, and folio. ie/ (RWH 14/242)

Worcester County Tax Records

Worcester County Tax Records accessed at http://www.mdlandrec.net/>.







MIHP No. WO-575 Thomas Cropper Farm 11238 Ocean Gateway Berlin, MD



WO-575 Thomas Cropper Farm Worcesker, MD E. Hammerstedt 12-4-07 MD SHPO Overview of the Thomas Cropper farmstead Pacing South from VS 50.



WO-575 Thomas Cropper Farm worcester, mo E. Hammerstedt 12-4-07 MD SHOO Overview from the rear of the Thomas Cropper farmskad, facing northeast.



W0-575 Thomas Cropper Farm worcester, MD E. Hammerstedt 12-4-07 MD SHPO The Thomas Cropper farmhouse, constructed area 1908, facing southwest.



WO-575 Thomas Cropper Farm worceski, mo E. Hammerstedt 12-4-07 MD SHPO Thomas Cropper farmbouse & domostic outbuilding, facing east.



100-575 Thomas Cropper Farm Worce ster MD E. Hammerstedt 12-4-07 MD SHPO Rear of the Thomas cropper farmhouse with additions. New facing northwest.



WO-575 Thomas Cropper Farm Worcester, MD E. Hammerstedt 12-4.07 MI) SHPO Outbuildings on the Thomas Cropper Farm, facing northwest.



NO-575 Thomas Cropper Farm Worcester, MO E. Hammerstedt 12-4-07 MI) SHPO outhuildings on the Thomas Cropper Farm, facing southeast.



Thomas Cropper Farm wordster, mo E. Hammerstedt 12-4-07 MD SHPO Outbuilding on the Thomas Cropper Farm, facing southwest.



WO-575 Thomas Cropper Farm Worcester, MD E. Hamnerstelt 12-4-07 MI) SHOO Chicken house on the Thomas Cropper Farm, facing northeast,



WO-575 Thomas Cropper Farm Worcester, MD E. Hammerstedt 12-4-07 MO SHPO on the Thomas Cropper Farm, Outbuilding facing Southeast,